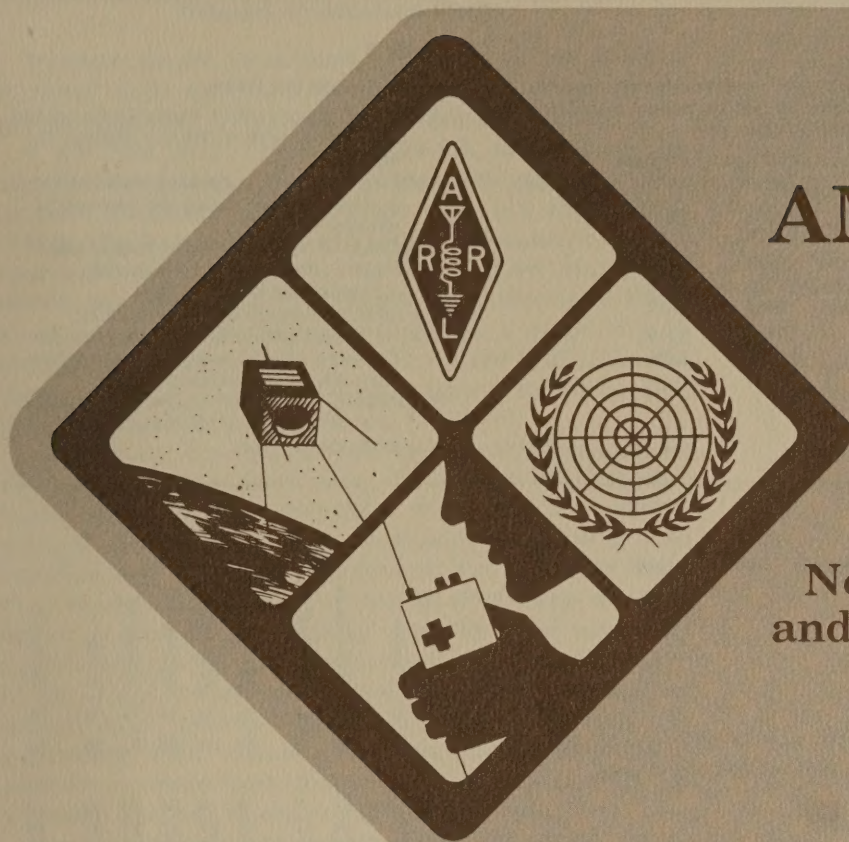




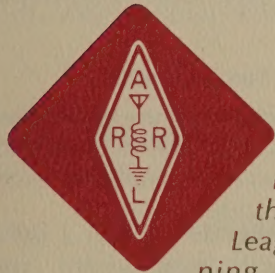
AMATEURADIO

News of the Amateur Radio
and Amateur Satellite Services

A Publication of the

American Radio Relay League, Inc.

April 1981
Volume 2 Number 4



AMATEUR RADIO SURVEY 1980: *A Look At Ham Radio As We Enter The Eighties*

For almost two years, the American Radio Relay League's Long-Range Planning Committee has been soliciting comments from members on the future of ARRL and Amateur Radio. To supplement what information it already had, ARRL last year employed the Institute for Social Research at Florida State University in Tallahassee to do its own study of radio amateurs. Florida State's research, which was based on a random sampling of 8895 U.S. and Canadian radio amateurs (or one in every 44), yielded more than 500 pages of information on the interests, opinions and problems of radio amateurs in 1980. Here are some of the results of the Florida State survey, as reported by David Sumner, ARRL assistant general manager, in the March 1981 issue of the amateur radio journal, *QST*.

The Radio Amateur of 1980

If we could find the "typical" radio amateur of today, he would be a 46-year-old male living in a single-family home. He attended college and probably graduated. His annual family income is not quite \$30,000, \$308 of which

is spent on Amateur Radio. He was first licensed in 1963, and has found Amateur Radio to be useful in his career. He has \$1668 invested in his radio station.

Our "typical" amateur spends 6.1 hours per week on Amateur Radio. His on-the-air time mostly is spent rag-chewing. However, he spends a lot of time not actually transmitting: building and repairing equipment, experimenting and monitoring. He probably has equipment that can be operated mobile in an emergency, though he may not have it actually installed in his car. If active, he is probably a member of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). His attitude toward ARRL is generally favorable, and he is likely not to see any amateur magazine except ARRL's *QST*.

If an Amateur Radio issue comes up which he thinks is important he will express his opinions on the air, but probably not in any other way. He probably does not attend local Amateur Radio club meetings regularly. He feels somewhat negative about the Federal Communications Commission if he is in the U.S., somewhat positive about the Department of Communications if in Canada. He strongly supports the Morse code requirement for amateur licensing, and he is very concerned about malicious (deliberate) interference on the airwaves. Looking
(Continued next page)

Table 1

Selected demographics of survey respondents

Highest level of education completed:

Grade school or less	2%
Some high school	9
High school graduate	19
Some college	32
College graduate	18
Some graduate work	8
Graduate degree	14

Approximate total family income:

Less than \$10,000	10%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	27
\$20,000 to \$29,999	29
\$30,000 to \$39,999	18
\$40,000 to 49,999	8
\$50,000 or more	7

Station is located in (multiple answers permitted):

Single-family residence on 1 acre or more	20%
Single family residence on less than 1 acre	63
Apartment, condominium, or other multi-family dwelling	6
College dormitory, military garrison or other group quarters	1
Mobile home	4
Automobile, truck or other vehicle	28
Have hand-held transceiver	17
Currently do not have a station	8

Table 2

Average investment in respondents' Amateur Radio stations and average annual expenditure on equipment, supplies, etc.

	Average investment	Average annual expenditure
U.S.	\$1651	\$308
Canada	\$2073	\$347
ARRL members	\$2273	\$456
Former members	\$1382	\$183
Never members	\$882	\$192
Old-timers	\$2143	\$316
Newcomers	\$1221	\$439

Table 4

Effect of Amateur Radio on career

	U.S.	Canada	Old Timers	Newcomers	Novice	Technician	General	Advanced	Extra	Women
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Am studying, do work, or did work in related field	43	45	66	29	25	41	39	53	65	14
In my career, Amateur Radio is or was:										
Very useful	26	34	57	8	8	19	24	36	42	13
Somewhat useful	27	24	24	17	15	27	27	31	31	16
Not particularly useful	41	38	19	54	53	48	49	31	24	63
Expect it to be useful	7	4	0	22	25	6	5	3	3	9

Table 3

Terms Used in this Article

Active — Reports some Amateur Radio activity in a typical week during the previous 12 months.
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toward the future, the typical amateur is interested in personal computers and amateur satellites, although he has made no plans to be active in either field.

The nontypical radio amateur is just as interesting. Table 1 lists some selected demographics of the survey population: education, income and residence/station location. Table 2 shows the financial investment in their avocation of different groups of amateurs. Note that the definitions of "newcomer" and "old-timer" are somewhat arbitrary (see table 3); the survey report broke respondents into five categories according to the year they were first licensed, but only two extremes are shown here because of space constraints. Table 4 analyzes the effect of Amateur Radio on one's career. Newcomers do not expect their hobby to be as useful as old-timers have found it to be; whether this will change as newcomers gain more experience, only time will tell.

As a group, radio amateurs are very conscious of their responsibility to perform public service (table 5). Emergency communications is seen as especially important, particularly among the newcomers and women. Also, newcomers and women regard technical training and experimentation as "very important" less often than the other three traditional justifications for the Amateur Radio Service: providing emergency communications, developing operating skills and enhancing international good will. (The four justifications are taken from the FCC regulations, Section 97.1, which sets forth the basis and purpose of Amateur Radio in the U.S.)

Table 6 shows that a majority of amateurs possess some capability for providing emergency communications,

although only one in six participates in on-the-air training exercises.

Attitudes Toward ARRL

One of the most important survey objectives was to find out how amateurs feel about ARRL's performance in regards to protecting, promoting and advancing Amateur Radio.

The key ingredient in the survey was a list of complaints a respondent might have about the ARRL. Respondents were asked to indicate which statements they agreed with, and were permitted to check as many as they wished. The results are shown in Table 7.

Among nonmembers, the reason for not belonging to ARRL most often cited was, "just didn't bother to join or rejoin." This was followed closely by "not active in Amateur Radio." Least mentioned reasons for not being an ARRL member were: the dues were too high, QST magazine was not as good as other magazines and the ARRL position on U.S. amateur license restructuring — a throwback to a controversy almost two decades ago. However, the three **together** are the "most important reason" for less than one-fourth of the nonmembers, and are just as likely to be cited by members as nonmembers.

While 77% of the members said they were basically satisfied with ARRL, the survey also showed the reasons for member dissatisfaction. The same three complaints were cited by members, along with three others: the need for ARRL to do more in public relations, in solving problems at the local level, and in representing Amateur

Women in Amateur Radio

Women always have been a minority in the ranks of licensed radio amateurs. Even today, according to the survey, only 6% of licensed amateurs are women.

If we look more closely at that 6%, though, we see significant changes taking place. Among the newcomers, amateurs licensed since 1978, 14% are women (Table 11). Two thirds of the female amateurs said that relatives were important influences in their decision to obtain licenses (Table 8). Women were also more likely to cite "help from a friend" as being a great help in studying, and are more likely to have used ARRL publications (Table 9). At least to now, Amateur Radio has had little effect on women's careers (Table 4).

Women are less active than men, averaging only 4.5 hours on Amateur Radio (Fig. 1). Though this information is not included in the tables, the survey showed that women spend far less time on experimentation and on building and repairing equipment, but are more likely than men to spend a great deal of time (nine or more hours per week) monitoring repeaters and operating traffic/emergency nets. Another survey result not shown in the tables is that women are more likely to regularly attend local, general-interest radio club meetings. In expressing their opinion on Amateur Radio matters, women are more likely than men to use the local club as a forum, and less likely to use the airwaves.

Women identify emergency communications, development of operating skills and the enhancement of international goodwill as "very important" to Amateur Radio more often than their male counterparts (Table 5). In a result which may come as a surprise to some, women support the Morse code requirement for licensing on

very high frequencies and ultra high frequencies even more strongly than men (Fig. 6).

The image of the radio amateur as a reclusive chap, misunderstood and unappreciated even by his family, is fading. Increasingly, Amateur Radio is becoming a family affair, pursued ardently by wives and daughters as well as by husbands and sons.

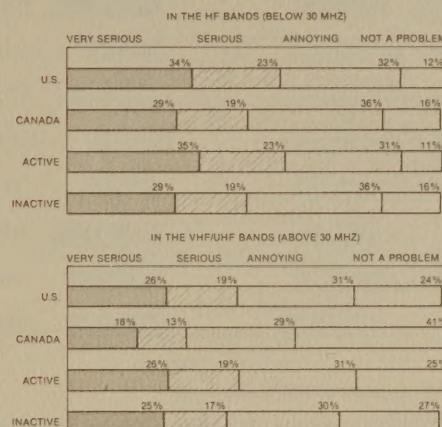


Fig. 5 — Opinions on the seriousness of malicious (deliberate) interference. Percentages are of those expressing an opinion.

Table 11

Respondents' sex by year first licensed.

	Before 1946	1946-60	1961-70	1971-80	1978-80	Overall
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Male	100	96	96	92	86	94
Female	0	4	4	8	14	6

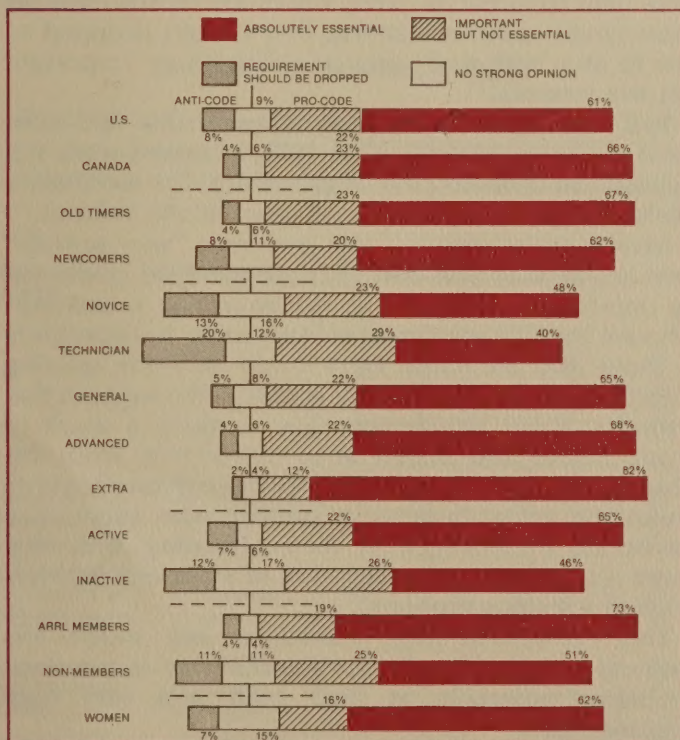


Fig. 3 — Attitudes toward Morse code requirement for hf (below 30 MHz) operating privileges.

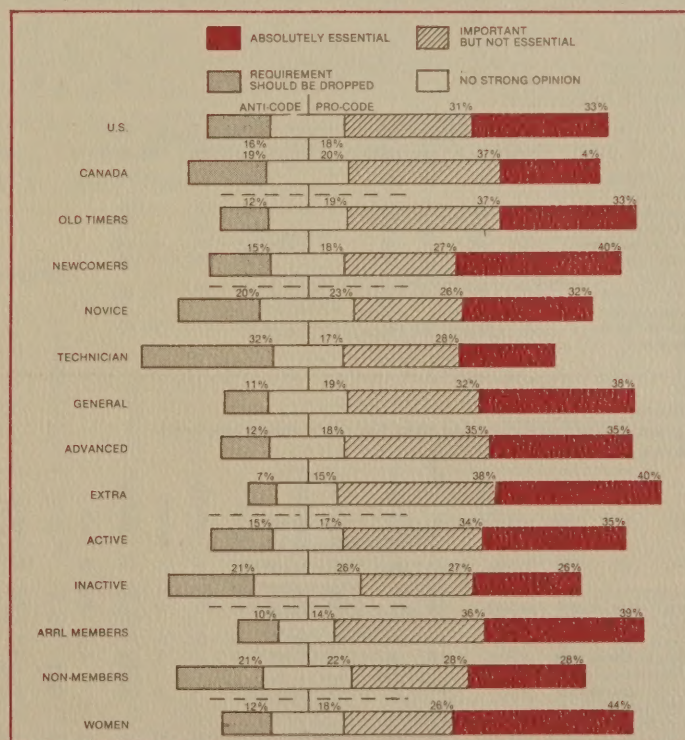


Fig. 4 — Attitudes toward Morse code requirement for vhf/uhf (above 30 MHz) operating privileges.

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Like weather in New England, radio amateurs' needs are everchanging. As the chief representative of the more than 400,000 radio amateurs in the U.S. and Canada, ARRL has the sometimes awesome job of staying on top of the issues as they affect Amateur Radio.

That is why ARRL last year sought the help of an independent organization with the professional experience in social research — the Institute for Social Research at Florida State University in Tallahassee — in determining present attitudes, interests and problems in the amateur community. The result was Amateur Radio Survey 1980, which contains findings that, we feel, warrant devoting this extended issue of *AmateurRadio* to.

Here are some particulars of the survey. The initial mailing of questionnaires was made in April 1980, with a follow-up mailing to nonrespondents being made at the

end of May and into June. The mailing was done by Florida State University, and all survey returns were sent directly to Tallahassee. The identities of those surveyed were not, and have not been, divulged to ARRL. In turn, the first cover letter did not identify ARRL as the sponsor.

The first mailing produced a usable return of 48.7% from the U.S. and 63.1% from Canada, the difference caused at least in part by the use of first class mail to Canada. The second mailing went by first class to both, and raised the rate of return to 62.9% overall, and 71% for Canada. These, we are told, are excellent return rates for a mail survey. A follow-up telephone survey of 186 non-respondents was used to determine the extent of non-response bias.

The tabulation of results contained in the survey report included crosstabulation of responses according to region of residence, status of membership in ARRL, level of Amateur Radio activity, year first licensed and class of license presently held. Later a crosstabulation of female respondents was supplied. These crosstabulations permitted a much more in-depth examination of the survey data than would otherwise be possible.

Because of the high rate of return, and because the original sample was a statistically valid random one, we think the results reasonably represent the U.S. and Canadian amateur population.



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